

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Yugoslavia

DATE DISTR 28 NOV 51

SUBJECT The Roman Catholic Church and its Communicants
In Vrsac

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1. The episcopal palace in Vrsac remains at the disposal of State authorities who have converted it into an orphans' home. The organist of the Roman Catholic Church in that city was seized in the street and was sentenced to corrective labor in prison as a non-worker harmful to society.
2. Religious processions are prohibited by State authorities as hazards to the movement of every day traffic. On Good Friday of 1951, amplifiers in the large cities worked all day, transmitting dance music.
3. Members of organized youth movements are forbidden to attend Mass or other sacred rites, while other individuals find themselves hindered in attending services. Teachers are outrightly prohibited from visiting churches or participating in religious feasts because, according to State organs, such occasions constitute a superstition and propagate a mysticism which must be eradicated from present-day Yugoslavia.
4. Many of those who are neither subjected to the discipline of the Communist Party nor dependents of the State now go to church regularly on feast days, including many who did not do so before the war. The churches are so crowded that sometimes people must remain in the courtyards.
5. The people have labeled some priests as "reds" because of their sympathy for Communism. As soon as one of these priests begins to preach, the people leave the church with marked hostility. This treatment is known to have been meted out to a priest named Samuilov in Novi Sad.

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